

PAUL BOESCH:

A LEGEND PASSES

MARCH 13-19

MATWATCH

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STEVE'S SIDELIGHTS By Steve Beverly

These stories are unfolding with all too frequent chapters in 1989. Another legend of pro wrestling who brought our love of the ring into focus passes, making one all too mindful of how the business will never again be as it was in our innocent years.

Veteran former wrestler and promoter Paul Boesch died suddenly in the early hours of last Wednesday morning of a heart attack. He was 76. His career had spanned six decades, from the time he first entered a ring in 1932.

Boesch never held the NWA world title but he did receive numerous title shots from Lou Thesz. However, Boesch, to the day of his death, remained the heart and soul of Texas wrestling. His major mark was made as a broadcaster of Houston wrestling from its inception on local TV in 1948. At one point, the Houston show was the longest continuously-running television wrestling show in the U.S. In Geoff Winingham's book, *FRIDAY NIGHT IN THE COLISEUM*, Boesch described how he made the jump from radio to the tube: "I had done the radio broadcasts for KLEE. A year later KLEE had a television license. And I was a natural. I was broadcasting on radio and I had never even see television but I was on it before I saw it."

Boesch, whose last weekly broadcasts were for an abortive NWA Jim Crockett Houston show in 1988, was quoted in 1971 with insights which are not far off the mark for today's wrestling market. "When they talk about the great good that television has done for wrestling," said Boesch, "they forget that there was a time when it almost killed wrestling. When the conflict between showing shows live and then taping them and putting them on another night wasn't recognized for what it was, it was a monster that could really devour any sport. You can't run in competition to yourself."

Just as in last week's *I REMEMBER...*, in which we reminisced about the people-to-people touch of Columbus, Ga., promoter Fred Ward, Paul Boesch had a similar respect for his fans. "I feel very strongly that a sport like wrestling, which is dependent on the community for its survival and growth, should repay the community for its support," Boesch once wrote. "I think you can fire yourself up with so much ambition that you can literally destroy your perspective, you know. I don't want to become the richest man in the graveyard." Quite the antithesis of the man Boesch later regretted selling the Houston territory to in the mid-1980s, Vince McMahon.

In recent months, Boesch had completed an unpublished memoir, of which thirty copies were said to be distributed to close friends. I have not had the privilege of reading them but I am told Boesch penned some remarkable perspective as to how so many major promoters have self-destructed in recent years, predominantly from ego and greed.

A few years back, shortly after the 1984 explosion of pro wrestling, Fred Ward told me how dramatically things were changing in the business and said, "It's not like it used to be. Vince McMahon Sr., Eddie Graham, Sam Muchnick, Paul Boesch and I used to be able to make a deal on a handshake."

Those handshake years are indeed gone. And to be frank, when I look at all the million-dollar glitz, war paint, television contracts, corporate ownerships and cartoon shenanigans of today's wrestling, somehow, I just wish there was room for another Paul Boesch. It may take one to save wrestling from its own excesses.



PAUL BOESCH IN 1970 TV INTERVIEW
With Bronco Lubich (L), Chris Markoff

* * * * * THIS WEEK'S * * * * *

**NIGHTLINE DIGESTS PRO WRESTLING
REGULATION; ALBANO GUESTS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Capt. Lou Albano called for continued regulation of pro wrestling during a less-than-rational debate on ABC's NIGHTLINE last Friday night.

Albano debated California Assemblyman Richard Floyd, who is behind a deregulation bill in the Golden State. Albano charged, "Once they deregulate (sic) all throughout the nation, that's the end of any doctors at ringside and protection for the wrestler."

Floyd countered, "Nobody's saying not to have a doctor. But if we have a state-sanctioned, licensed game, that's what it's gonna be. In boxing, the referee is in complete control. He can stop a bout. He can penalize people. But the wrestling ref, state-sanctioned and licensed in California---his main job is to not see the bad guy do something."

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED columnist Frank Deford, also appearing, said he felt the current hoopla over the World Wrestling Federation claims of its matches being entertainment "won't hurt a bit" at the gate.

"If the WWF claims that it's a show," said Albano, "it may be because THEY are a show, not other organizations. The NWA and the AWA are trying to get back to the basics of wrestling."

**EIGHT FORMER CHAMPIONS TO APPEAR
ON CLASH VI NEW ORLEANS SPECIAL**

ATLANTA - At least eight former NWA world champions have committed to appear on the April 2 CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS VI, live from New Orleans on TBS (3:30-7 p.m. EST).

Whipper Billy Watson, Lou Thesz, Gene Kiniski, Harley Race, Pat O'Connor, Buddy Rogers, Dory Funk Jr. and Terry Funk will be at ringside for the Ricky Steamboat-Ric Flair NWA title rematch. All will be recognized during the telecast. Plus, TBS will host a champions' dinner for the veteran stars the night before the telecast.

Negotiations failed to bring Jack Brisco, who beat Race for the title in 1973, to New Orleans. Brisco, a semi-recluse since retiring in 1985, is said to have contractual ties with the WWF preventing his appearing.

Some of the former champions are expected to offer predictions on the Steamboat-Flair bout on the March 31 COUNTDOWN TO CLASH special on TBS.

**STING, BARRY AGREE TO TBS TERMS;
BOTH EXPECTED TO GET MAJOR PUSHES**

ATLANTA - Sting and former NWA U.S. champion Barry Windham have signed new NWA contracts, sealing off two major performers J.J. Dillon was expected to raid for, the WWF.

Terms were not disclosed, though some sources say Sting has signed a multiyear deal. Dillon had reportedly promised he could deliver both Windham and Lex Luger, whose contract runs until next year, to Titan Sports.

Titan sources had told insiders Sting was the major NWA star, aside from Ric Flair, that Vince McMahon had most coveted.

COMINGS & GOINGS

SNUKA'S BACK: Jimmy Snuka rejoined the WWF last week, once again showing how money can open closed doors. Snuka vowed in a 1986 interview that he'd never work for Vince again. Also new to the Titan troops is John Tenta, the American who's made Japan home for several years.

THE CUTS: A reported dozen Titan regulars have been let go, probably after WM5. They include Ron Bass and Sam Houston but I hope TBS doesn't try to sign them because it will again look like a farm for Vince's castoffs. Bet on Bass working for Dusty's PWF.

DUSTY'S DELUSIONS: In response to several calls---Dusty is neither: (a) returning as NWA booker or (b) being "begged" by TBS to come back as a wrestler. Mr. Runnels is reportedly telling that story to whomever will listen and the TBS office just laughed at the notion of either. Says Jim Herd: "We offered him what we felt was a generous deal in January and he refused it and hasn't spoken with me since."

MORE PWF: Black Bart & Bobby Jaggers are in for Dusty as Southern Force. Also, Terry Funk, who's done two classic interviews in a row, is now appearing in a cap and gown on the Florida show with PROFESSOR FUNK'S FUNNIES.

MICHAEL'S TURN: The NWA may get hammered for not building this one better on TV but Michael Hayes should have turned on Lex Luger in a tag match at the Omni by the time you read this, unless plans changed. This now sets up Michael to rejoin Jim Ross as color commentator on WCW, reviving their old act in the UWF.

BETTER DAYS?: Everyone from newsletter writers to ticketbuyers to insiders have criticized some of the poor NWA house matchups. MATWATCH has been told by insiders a key reason for this by a TBS source: "We couldn't afford to get a guy started in a major program when he wasn't signed and run the risk of him leaving as has been the case in the past." Now that virtually all of the major performers are under contract, I'm told the TV angles and house matchups will have much more meaning and cohesion. Let's hope.

OTHER NWA BITS: Keiji Muto is being considered for a spot but would likely not be called Super Black Ninja. Also---and I have nothing other than personal deduction to back this up---it looks like if Jim Cornette & the Midnight Express continue in the NWA beyond April 15, they would be non-contract performers. I emphasize: that could change. Several

sources indicate TBS covets keeping Cornette but the company feels the Midnights have been used to capacity. And Jim is not thought to be interested in breaking up the act.

RATINGS RAP: WWF pulled a 10.0 on 241 stations for the week ending Feb. 19.

STARR TO STARR: Ron Starr at least had some intelligence and balance as SCW color commentator last week. But Alan Starr continues weak. A bright spot continues to be David Sannartino's heel work.

\$\$\$\$\$: From the Village Voice....one reason for Vince's rush job on legislation in the New Jersey Senate: he would have to pay in excess of \$600,000 in taxes for WMF.

CWF IN KNOXVILLE: For 3/24, the card is Riches vs. Chono/RPM Davis for the CWF tag belts; Prichard vs. Gordy for the CWF heavyweight title; Black Bart vs. The Dog (this one will change); Hunter Dale Vesey vs. Danny Davis; Hunter Bob Brown vs. Willie B. Hert and Tony Anthony vs. Brad Anderson.

CHATTANOOGA BLUES: CWF canceled 3/11 card in Chattanooga after heavy plugs on the network. Observers in the area call the CWF "dead" in the city.

AWF(UL): The American Wrestling Federation, which has a half-hour local show in Chattanooga, features a female referee, assorted masked folks and an announcer known simply as "The Bookie." It follows two hours of WEF shows, and my friend David Williamson says it's one of the few shows which can make Titan look serious.

D.C. PROFILING: Ric Flair is shortly expected to have a face-to-face visit with President Bush at the White House. Bush, said to be a fan, considers Flair his favorite.

SOME CHANGES: NWA goes back to announcers doing commentary live at the arenas rather than those infernal voiceovers with the syndie shows of March 25. I haven't heard a solitary NWA or WWF show that I felt was properly mixed, save a couple of NWA MAIN EVENTS in January, going the VO route.

JOE KNOWS: Pedicino's segments which (for the present) will air on NWA syndication only are called JOE PEDICINO KNOWS... and will be a "wrestling journal of the air."

TITLE ON TV: The Eddie Gilbert/Rick Steiner U.S. tag team title victory over the Varsity Club will probably air the weekend of March 25 and be one of Lance Russell's first big calls for the NWA.

THE ANNUAL: Please be patient. I hope to have the extra orders mailed this week. I've been recovering from a massive flu bug that knocked me out of action for five days and I haven't been able to pick up the covers.

THE SCREENING ROOM: NO HOLDS BARRED

By Chris Crosby

(ED. NOTE: For professional reasons, this reviewer is using a pseudonym. But he had an opportunity to view a recent screening of the upcoming Vince McMahon production.)

Rip (Hulk Hogan) is the WWF world champion. He is the idol of millions, a man of his word who spends his idle time doing charity work. Brell is an evil TV exec for a third place network. He has tried everything to convince Rip to jump to his network. Money fails, physical intimidation fails--even seduction by the beautiful Sam (Joan Severance). So Brell stages a series of Tough Guy contests and finds a giant brute named Zeus (Tiny Lister). After a telecast, Zeus and Brell stumble across Rip's teenage brother, Randy. Zeus brutally beats Randy (one of an endless series of meaningless brawls in the film), so Rip agrees to meet Zeus in a no holds barred, live broadcast.

The final fight is well-choreographed but that's about all you can say. NO HOLDS is geared toward kids and teens. Those who wonder if Hulk can act will not find the answer here. In every frame of the film, he is the same persona he has been perfecting for years. Those who like him will enjoy the film. Those who hate him will not be converted.

At times, the dialogue is as juvenile as the audience to which this is intended. Such as when Rip confronts an evil gang and one member has an intestinal reaction, to which another responds, "Something smells like dukee."

Aside from some funny moments with Stan Hansen, the appeal of Severance and Lister's physical ability, this film may be one of the fastest ever to hit the videocassette market from the big screen.

PINFALL PROFILE: HOW SYNDICATION WORKS (Part 2)

Last week, we left off by previewing how in 1984, Vince McMahon Jr. revolutionized TV wrestling syndication by exploiting an avenue now known as "compensation syndication" or "comp."

Whereas the early days of TV wrestling found stations producing their own shows or taking taped programs free of charge (barter) in exchange for a promotion's arena plugs, McMahon began taking a page from television evangelists to help him climb his ladder to a national promotion.

McMahon began choosing selected large markets across the nation and purchasing the entire hour. In fact, a recent issue of CHANNELS Magazine details how Vince would ask

station managers for the time period of their best existing wrestling show or the highest-rated available non-network time slot and offer double the revenue the station was grossing over a one-year period. It was a Godfather-like offer for most stations.

Vince controlled stations then, often, by demanding exclusivity on his "comp" channels, which in some cases meant the dropping of veteran wrestling promotions from a station. Even today, McMahon pays a reported \$400,000 a year to WNEW in New York to carry his key WWF syndicated shows in choice Saturday time periods. Early on, rival promoters mistakenly believed Vince could never stand the expense. But McMahon fooled them by selling up to six minutes of his advertising time to national sponsors, unprecedented since wrestling had departed the networks in 1955. Local stations still retain the other six minutes for their own sales. But McMahon grosses an estimated \$16 million a year in national spot sales.

Jim Crockett joined the "comp" melee in 1987 after his purchase of Bill Watts' UWF by forming The Wrestling Network (actually a syndication unit designed to push sales of Crockett's shows---which numbered six just after the UWF and Florida buys). At one point, Crockett was paying \$7,000 a week to New York's WPIX to air the UWF.

But---as an important note---neither the WWF nor the Ted Turner-owned NWA pay "comp" in many markets outside the top 20. Reason? The top 20 markets contain virtually half of the nation's viewing audience and payment to smaller-market stations is usually wasteful. Plus, a key reason the NWA will pay for the rotten time periods it currently has in New York and Los Angeles is---in order to sell national ads, agencies demand those markets, no matter the time slot. Syndicators of many game shows which air after 2 a.m. in big cities do the same thing.

Next week, we'll examine the syndication game as it figures into cancellation or rescheduling of your favorite wrestling show.

TV TEMPO (Week of Mar. 6-12)

SCALE: PINFALL! - Must See PILEDRIVER - Excellent
POWERSLAM - Good DRAW - Average RESTHOLD - Fair BOMB
- Poor PLUS - Midscale rating.

(FLORIDA) - Southern Force (Black Bart & Bobby Jaggers) d. Lou Perez/Ric Diamond; Bam Bam Bigelow d. Mighty Mike Awesome; Scott Hall/Brett Sawyer DQ over Commandos; Dustin Rhodes/Italian Stallion d. Jim Backlund/El Diablo. FEATURES: PROF. FUNK'S FUNNIES

with Terry Funk discussing Dusty's lineage; Elvis lookalike comes out to sing, "That's All Right," and drapes a scarf around Gordon Solie's neck. DRAW.

(SCW) - Chance Meyers d. John Michaels when Joel Deaton blindsides Michaels and Meyers cradles; Steve Prichard/Tim Burger d. Master Blaster/Louie Louie; Mr. Atlanta/David Sammartino d. Georgia Power; Tommy Rich/Ron Starr double DQ with Mr. Wrestling II/Ranger Ross. FEATURE: Ross presented plaque for "making major league." RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(PWTW) - WMF, WMS Update; CWA, Jeff Jarrett-Dutch Mantel brawl; WCCW, Chris Adams d. Rick Leach; ACW, Ricky Nelson d. Trent Knight; CWF, Terry Gordy DQ over Rip Rogers; SCW, Tommy Rich d. The Bullet; WWC, Batten Twins d. Kansas Jayhawks. MARS WRESTLER OF WEEK: Baby Doll, for her new role as ACW color commentator. DRAW.

(CWA/SYND.) - CWA TAG TITLE, Robert Fuller/Jimmy Golden d. Scott Steiner/Jed Grundy to regain belts; Shogun/Samurai d. David Johnson/Chris Frazier; Action Jackson d. Rodney Napper; Mason-Dixon Connection d. Rough & Blue Knight; Bill Dundee wins DQ over Frankie Lancaster when Dutch Mantel runs in; Mantel/Master of Pain d. Jungle Jim/Brian Lee. POWERSLAM.

(ACW) - Baby Doll (Nicola Roberts) is Rick Stewart's color commentator. Tommy Angel d. Joe Cruz; Ricky Nelson d. Trent Knight; Doug Somers/Colt Steel win DQ over L.A. Stephens/Nelson Royal; South Pacific Connection d. Masked Superstars (one Superstar is unmasked but sticks a bucket over his head); Deaton Bros. d. David Isley/Jack Jackson; M.O.D. Squad d. Gene Ligon/George South; INTERVIEW: Nikita Koloff discusses devoting full time to care for his wife, who is suffering from cancer. RESTHOLD.

(AWF) - Kenny Arden double countout v. Golden Ram; AWF TV TITLE: Paul Lee wins DQ over Sonny Starr to retain belt when Ram & Rick Starr run in until Arden & Chaz Lane save; Bruise Brothers/Golden Ram vs. Lee/Arden/Lane still going as show ends. DOUBLE BOMB!

(CWF) - Tony Anthony d. Scott Sadlin; The Dog d. Rob Morgan; Masa Chono/Mike Davis double DQ v. Danny Davis/Doug Furnas when Hunters & Riches run in; Tom Prichard d. Brad Anderson; Johnny & Davey Rich d. Alan Martin/Rip Rogers. REPLAYS: Hunters vs. Furnas/Davis; Gordy vs. Rip Rogers. RESTHOLD.

(WCCW) - Gary Young d. David Hinkel; Brickhouse Brown d. Jim Ward; Eric Embry d. Cactus Jack Manson; Chris Adams/Jeff Jarrett win DQ over Beauty & the Beast; INTERVIEW: Percy Pringle & Skandor Akbar have standoff over status of "Reinstate Eric Embry" effort. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(NWA/TBS) - [MCW]: Ric Flair d. Greg Evans and tries to break Evans' leg as a "statement." Flair says he'll go for both Luger's U.S. belt and Ricky Steamboat's world title. NWA TV TITLE: Mike Rotunda d. Cougar Jay; SST d. Bob Emory/Randy Mulkey; Michael Hayes/JYD/Breakdance Young d. Cruel Connection & Rip

matwatch Page 5

Vol. 1, No. 38 / March 13-19

Morgan but Hayes is upset when Young's ring music is played instead of BADSTREET. Other winners: Iron Sheik, Sting, Barry Windham, Kevin Sullivan & Danny Spivey, Eddie Gilbert & Rick Steiner, Butch Reed.

DANGER ZONE: Paul E. with Luger & Hayes. Lex agrees to meet Jack Victory for U.S. title April 2 & Hayes balks when Paul E. asks if Lex is "the new Freebird." RESTHOLD.

[MAIN EVENT]: Iron Sheik d. Crash Chandler; Russian Assassin Victory d. Tony Suber; Rotunda/Williams d. Dick Murdoch/Hayes. CHITOWN: Luger-Windham. DRAW.

(NWA/SYND.) - [W. WIDE]: Lance Russell introed as new host. CHITOWN: Road Warriors d. Sullivan/Williams; Spivey/Rotunda d. Suber/Mark Brown; Warriors d. Mac Anderson/Nasty Ned; Breakdance Young d. Keith Steinborn; Other winners: Gilbert/Steiner, SST. BOMB-PLUS.

[NWA PRO]: Fantastics d. Jerry Price/Max McGyver; Abdullah the Butcher d. Mike Jackson; Murdoch d. Julio Barrera; Other winners: Spivey, Reed. CHITOWN: Midnights vs. Victory/Rose, Steiner vs. Rotundo. BOMB.

(WWF/SYND. & USA) - [PTW]: Rick Rude d. Koko B. Ware; Dino Bravo d. Sam Houston; Red Rooster d. Tim Patterson; Other winners: Haku, John Studd, Honky Tony Man & Greg Valentine, Twin Towers, Bad News Brown. RESTHOLD.

[SUPERSTARS]: Jake Roberts d. John Zeiglar; Tully & Arn d. Santini & Daniels; Honky/Valentine d. Tim Horner & Dave Stoudemire; Bushwackers d. Danny Davis/Tim Sawyer; Blue Blazer Hart d. Gino Carabello. FEATURES: Hogan/Savage tales, BRO. LOVE w. Jim Duggan, Sherri Martel's Spring Revue. BOMB-PLUS.

[SPOTLIGHT]: Bret Hart d. Darryl Peterson; Hercules d. Mike Sharpe; Other winners: Brooklyn Brawler, Powers of Pain, Twin Towers. FEATURES: Sherri's Revue, BRO. LOVE w. Ted DiBiase & Million \$ Belt. BOMB-PLUS.

[CHALLENGE]: Tito Santana d. Danny Davis; Bad News Brown d. Dave Lanning; Anabolic Warrior d. Zeiglar; Other winners: Twin Towers, Rougeaus. FEATURES: Same as SUPERSTARS, plus Mean Gene w. Andre & Heenan. BOMB-PLUS.

(WWF/SNME) - Brutus Beefcake wins DQ over Rick Rude when Andre interferes. Jake Roberts brings out Damien but Rude & Andre doubleteam. Beefcake revives but it takes John Studd to clear ring; Hulk Hogan d. Bad News Brown; Ted DiBiase d. Blue Blazer Hart; Rockers double COR with Tully & Arn; Red Rooster d. Brooklyn Brawler. Brawler/Heenan try doubleteam after but Taylor clears ring. FEATURE: Elizabeth says she'll be in neither Hogan's nor Randy Savage's corner at WM5. POWERSLAM.

(LTR) - Robert (Lyle Alzado) throws a party for his fellow wrestlers, including the Road Warriors. But Carol Dixon shows up uninvited and takes up with the Warriors. One funny moment is when Hawk calls Carol "doliface." DRAW.

(AWA) - Col. DeBeers d. Red Tyler; Steve Ray d. The Nomad; Mahoo McDaniel & Tom Zenk d. Larry Zbyszko &

Manny Fernandez when Mahoo pins Larry Z. CLASSIC: Jimmy Garvin d. Baron Von Raschke. FEATURE: Bill Apter v. Fernandez. RESTHOLD.

LINES OF THE WEEK - 1. Road Warrior Hawk, WWF: "When we get through with the newcomers, they'll be in the local pub downing Jack Daniels with Kitty Dukakis." 2. Jim Cornette, TBS: "Jack Victory could not guard the sugar bowl at a tea party." 3. Terry Funk, FCW: "What has four teeth, 2 eyes, no brains and bad breath? A Dusty Rhodes fan." 4. Rhodes, FCW, after Elvis lookalike departs: "If you believe that was Elvis Presley, I'm standing here--live and in person--Al Jolson." 5. Joe Pediçino, NWEU SUPERSTARS, to Boni Blackstone: "A guy offers you a \$10,000 ring and you call that a bribe and another guy offers you a box of chicken and you go crazy?" 6. Vince & Jesse, WWF: VM, "I've been around a little longer than you have, Jesse." JV, "What do you expect from somebody who's 54 years old?" 7. Ron Starr, SCW, to Alan Starr: "It's your loss that we're not related."

8. Jim Ross, NME: "Paul, you and I have nothing in common with Lex Luger's gut." 9. Paul E. Dangerously, NME: "What are they gonna name Texas Stadium if they name it after Randy Rose---I DROPPED THE FALL ANONYMOUS Stadium?" 10. Tony Schiavone, WWF: "When Brother Love sees the Million \$ Belt, maybe his face will turn red." 11. Ross, NME: "I don't have any money. I'm paying alimony up my kazoo." 12. Bill Dundee, CWF: "The only wildcat Cooley's seen is the one he has at home washing baby diapers." 13. Tom Prichard, CWF: "I wonder who washes The Dog's jeans." 14. Lou Albano, NIGHTLINE: "The NWA & AWA are moving back to the basics of real wrestling." 15. Jeff Greenfield, NIGHTLINE: "Captain Lou, I AM gonna get control of this if I have to get into a half-nelson."

16. Ventura, WWF: "The Blazer has some aerial tactics I haven't seen displayed since I retired." 17. Brother Love, WWF: "Brother Morton, Brother Love has not been zipped and he's certainly never been zapped." 18. The Bullet, SCW: "I'm gonna turn the Wildfire into a smoldering ember." 19. Danny Spivey, TBS: "Who cares about Vince Dooley? He's on his way out, anyway." 20. Bob Caudle & David Crockett, NWA PRO: DC, "That's a face (Abdullah's) only a mother could love." BC, "I don't know about his mother." 21. Gordon Solie, FCW, on Elvis lookalike, "I'll be dipped." 22. Ted DiBiase, SNME: "What's important is money, not Tunney." 23. Ventura, SNME: "Can you imagine trying to do the Rude Awakening with no hair? It'd be like kissing Okerlund." 24. Lee Marshall, AWA: "That face (Mahoo's) is not the face of the loan officer at the bank."

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Rep. Richard Floyd, NIGHTLINE: "Go back to the amateur style & you lose your audience." 2. Larry Z., AWA: "Mike Tyson, you think you're a champion? Then get in the ring with me. But then, he can't even take care of a woman."

QUESTION OF THE WEEK - Dangerously, DANGER ZONE, to Hayes: "Does this make Lex Luger the new Freebird?"

TRUTH-IN-ADVERTISING AWARD - Ed Whalen, Stampede:
 "Owen Hart WAS the Blue Blazer for 6 or 8 weeks but he quit the WWF. Someone else is now the Blazer and Owen is wrestling in Mexico."

NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK - 1. "Uncle Nasty," Jerry Saggs' new name for Dusty Rhodes. 2. "Pet Wimp," Eddie Gilbert's new name for Mike Rotunda.

BEST PICTURES - 1. NBC, shot of Blazer flying out of ring onto DiBiase. 2. NBC, closeup of Liz Poffo anguishing over "decision." 3. TBS, shot of Cougar Jay flying out of ring.

BEST SEGMENTS - 1. FCM, Professor Funk's Funnies. 2. TBS, Danger Zone.

BLOOPER AWARD - Road Warrior Hawk, WWW, for saying "Dead dead don't men---I mean, DEAD MEN DON'T MAKE MONEY. I almost messed up, you mulletheads."

BOO AWARDS - 1. Lou Albano & Richard Floyd, NIGHTLINE, for getting into a Morton Downey-ish yelling match on the show. 2. WWF, for giving us less than 9:30 of wrestling on each of its syndicated shows. You can tell WRESTLEMANIA is coming. 3. NWA, for a disappointing pair of syndie shows.

CABLE RATINGS RAP (Mar. 4-6)

	RATING	SHARE
WWF PRIME TIME (USA 3/6)	3.6	5.1
NWA MAIN EVENT (TBS 3/5)	3.5	6.3
NWA WCW (TBS 3/4)	2.5	4.4
NWA MAIN EVENT A.M. (TBS 3/4)	0.8	5.8

(ANALYSIS: ALL-AMERICAN was pre-empted for an auto race last week. NWA MAIN EVENT soared to an all-time high last week with the Flair-Steambat clips and top-flight routines by Ross & Dangerously. WCW improved on its OLYMPIC GOLD lead-in by 130% but the all-mismatch shows are hurting interest, in our view. PRIME TIME actually matched the numbers of FACE TO FACE last week with a lackluster lineup.)

TUBE TALK: From this end, SNME was entertaining but not as power-packed as the January edition: Rude-Beefcake was predictable and Hogan vs. Brown looked like almost every Hulk match on SNME...BUT...Rockers-Tully & Arn may have been the best WWF match I've ever seen; however, I'm so tired of those double COR finishes. That's 3 times now on TV with them. Plus, I'd have liked to have seen them really turn DiBiase & Hart loose and let them go for 20 minutes. Too much to ask from Titan, I guess. I know the money and exposure is great but the Terry Taylor thing is getting to be a major embarrassment to me.

The last 3 weeks, I've heartily endorsed . . .

the great Hogan-Savage edited tales to build the WM5 main event. But after Saturday and seeing them on all three shows, I believe they went one week too many. And the weekend's 6-min. segs for each were a bit long.

Another meaning less week for NWA syndies and only the Flair heavy heel bit and DANGER ZONE saved WCW with only token mention of the April 2 show....Percy Pringle offered some of his classic facial wrinkles on WCCW....AWA shortened to 40 minutes for college basketball runover. Next week's ESPN show at 11:30 p.m. (EST) Saturday.....PWIW starts Saturday night at 11:30 (ET) on FNN/SCORE, will be pre-empted the next week and be on at 9 p.m. every week in April except one...Late word from Tampa, WTOG carried THE HOMECOMING live Sat. night. Yeah, Dusty won the PWF title, beating the Steelman. Al Perez d. Mike Graham for the Fla. title; Scott Hall & Steve Keirn d. Dick Slater & Bam Bam Bigelow and Bam turned on Dickie; Dustin Rhodes won a DQ over Terry Funk when Terry used a chain on Dustin (he began the match by stomping on a fan trying to retrieve a poster Terry grabbed); Commandos d. Star Riders (Von Erichs no-showed); Southern Force/Terminator/Johnny Ace d. Brett Sawyer/Italian Stallion/Nasty Boys; Jim Backlund drew with Lou Perez. Thanks to KLON for the report.

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